Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

Spring 1992 **Volume 4, Number 2**

A Publication of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

Baldwin Bonanza events to span three days

Mary Brosius, garden columnist for the Pasadena Star News, is the honorary chair of the 22nd annual Baldwin Bonanza, a three-day benefit plant sale at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum.

On May 7 Ms. Brosius will attend the Lucky Baldwin Garden Bonanza Barbecue and Garden Auction, held for California Arboretum Foundation members and friends, beginning at 4:30 p.m. Reservations for the barbecue and auction featuring "Old, New, Beautiful and Rare" items are $50 per person.

Baldwin Bonanza XXII Preview Plant Sale will take place May 8 from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Reservations are $10 for Foundation members and $15 for their guests.

On May 9 the plant sale is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featured this year are orchids from the Arboretum collection, scented geraniums, indoor and outdoor palms, water conserving plants, shade plants, ornamental grasses and unusual shrubs like *Duranta repens*. A collection of pink hydrangeas and dwarf calla lilies will also be included as special Mothers Day gifts.

Duranta repens

Flowering plants: focus of Fiesta de Flores benefit sale

Volunteers from South Coast Botanic Garden have been scouting the Coast all the way from Ventura to San Diego looking for unusual plants for their annual sale. As a result, Fiesta de Flores on May 16 and 17 will showcase hundreds of plants seldom available in commercial nurseries.

The plant sale, open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, focuses on colorful blooming plants. Hybrid dwarf cannas in many color variations from subtle to vibrant, selected new strains of gaillardias and salvias, and fruit trees adapted to the coastal climate will be for sale.

Also offered are several bougainvilleas that remain a manageable size—perfect for baskets, containers and planters.

Most of the plants at the benefit sale have been propagated and raised by the volunteers themselves who will be there to talk about the plants. Horticultural societies which meet at the Garden will also sell their specialty plants and offer cultural advice.

To celebrate their scavenging success, the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation will hold a members-only party and preview sale the evening of May 15. Call (310) 544-1847 for membership information.

Arboretum's resident experts retire

The Department extends a fond goodbye to the Arboretum's resident peacock, coyote and bird experts along with the Department's accountant.

Lee Wakeman, Executive Administrative Assistant for the gardens since 1961, started his career with the County in 1953 as a student professional worker with the Department of Flood Control. After leaving the Army, he applied for the position of Senior Administrative Assistant at the Arboretum and was offered the job if he promised to stay for five years. His pledge stretched to 31 years.

Lee's knowledge of peacocks and coyotes came out of neccesity. Forced to take responsibility for fielding questions and complaints from Arboretum neighbors, he decided to learn the facts by reading, talking to experts and watching the subjects themselves. "My early morning walks every day really gave me first-hand knowledge of how peacocks and coyotes behave," he said.

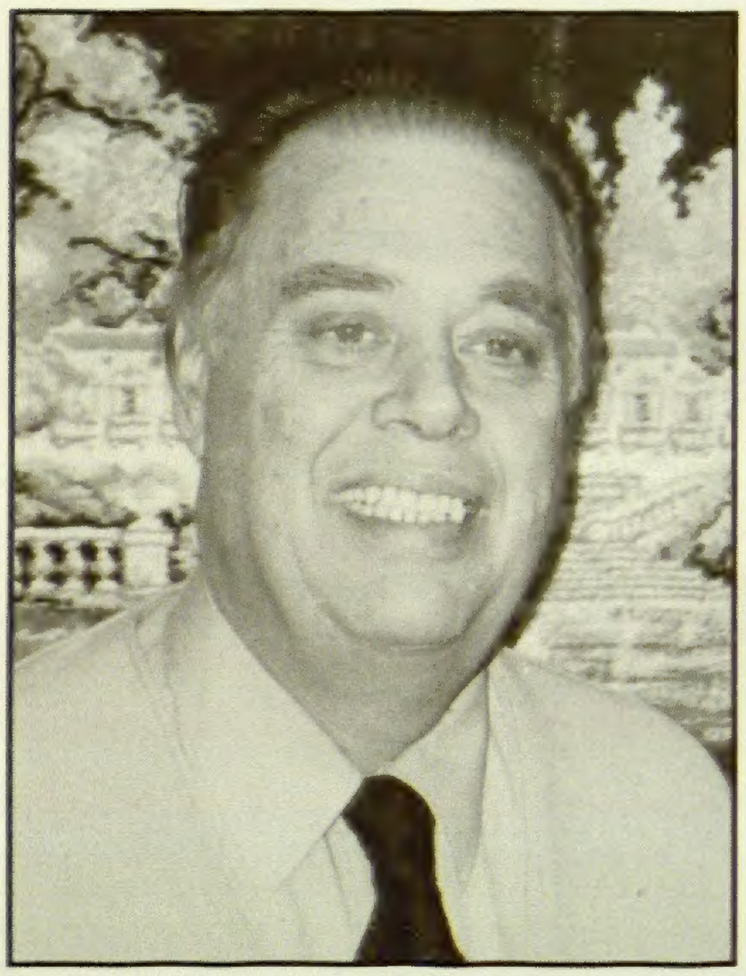
Lee now plans to live it up by taking cruises and jaunts to Las Vegas and Laughlin. "I'll miss the people and my early morning walks. I love the Arboretum. It was kind of like working in the Garden of Eden."

Mel Vargas started at Descanso in 1954 as the County's first information aide. A gardener for the Department of Parks and Recreation, he was given the choice of working at the Arboretum or Descanso, newly purchased by the County. "Descanso was love at first sight, while the Arboretum looked to me like nothing but historical buildings and wide open fields," he said. His duties included leading garden walks and the school tours which he inaugurated, and training the first docents to give the tours. He also created the annual Christmas show at Descanso.

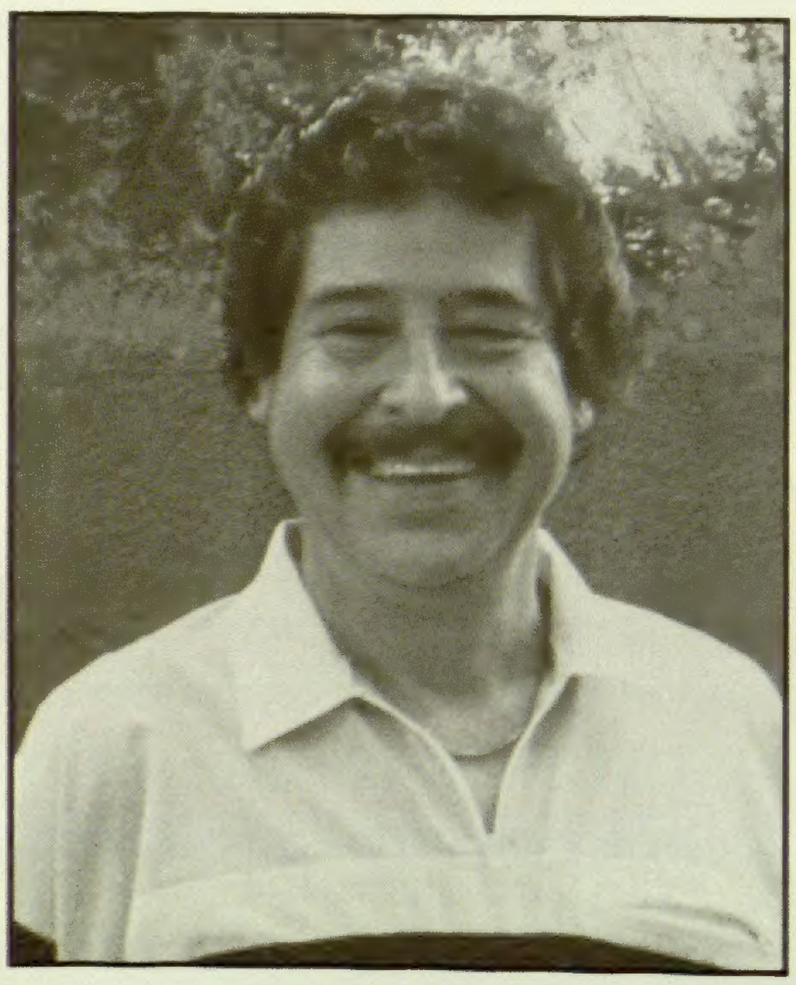
In 1981 Mel transferred to the Arboretum as a tour guide and ran the print shop and darkroom. Besides giving tours, he took photos for the Department archives and made plant identification labels. He also taught classes in flower making, wreath making and Christmas decorating.

Mel's love for plants started when he was child helping his mother maintain their one-third acre flower garden. "People would slow down or stop in front of our house to look at my mother's beautiful flowers. I knew then that I wanted to work in a botanical garden."

His study of birds began as a hobby and



Lee Wakeman



Mel Vargas

Helen Cescatti

Missouri Botanical Garden Library
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turned into a passion. He belongs to the National Audubon Society and many environmental groups and has become a bird reference for some County departments and the Los Angeles Zoo.

In retirement Mel plans to hike in the local mountains and deserts, fix up his vacation home in Crestline, build show cages for his hundreds of birds and work in his garden. In his "spare" time, he expects to give eclectic dinner parties and make stained glass windows and Tiffany lamps.

Helen Cescatti is last but not least among the Department's recent retirees. She started at the Arboretum in 1972 as an intermediate typist clerk working for the accounting technician. When that position became open, Helen filed for the job and got it. Her duties included approving requisitions for goods and materials and other accounting duties for the Department.

"It's been 20 good years," she noted. "We have laughed and cried together, we have worked and celebrated together. I will always remember and miss my Arboretum family," Helen wrote in a recent letter thanking her Arboretum friends for her farewell party in late March.

Helen's plans for retirement include trips to Las Vegas and visits to her husband, Aldo's, home town in Northern Italy where she may decide to settle permanently.

Wishes for the best of luck are extended to all three who have made valuable contributions to the Department during their long careers.

Newsletter Suspended

With this issue, Volume 4 Number 2, publication of *Arboreta and Botanic Gardens* newsletter is being suspended

For information about the gardens operated by Los Angeles County, please contact the individual gardens.

Westside gardens open for Friends' benefit tour

Friends of Robinson Gardens will welcome members and guests "...into the garden" for their fourth annual benefit tour on May 8. Virginia Robinson Gardens will be the centerpiece of the all-day tour that includes six distinctive gardens designed by prominent landscape architects. Featured this year will be the work of Robert M. Fletcher, Isabelle Greene, Richard Irving, Florence Yoch, Rick Mosbaugh, Chris Rosmini, Maria Mothersbaugh and Nancy Goslee Power. Designers will be present at the site of their creations to answer questions concerning the gardens.

The $100 ticket price of this event also includes a lavish, day-long tea served in the poolhouse at Robinson Gardens by Rococo.

The 1992 tour will honor Dr. Mildred E. Mathias, professor emerita at UCLA, with the Friends' inaugural Life Achievement Award. The award, to be presented at a black tie dinner on May 1, recognizes Dr. Mathias' extraordinary achievements in the field of botany, her lifelong dedication to conservancy and the environment, and her association with Robinson Gardens.

Dr. Franklin D. Murphy, former chancellor of UCLA and past chief executive officer of the Times Mirror Company, serves as honorary chairman of the event. Co-chairs are Ellen Donaldson and Geraldine Chutuk. For more information, please contact John Copeland at (310) 276-5367.

GARDEN EVENTS

May, June, July 1992

Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, Arcadia

May 3 – 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m
Epiphyllum Society of America show and sale
May 7, 8, 9 – Baldwin Bonanza (see story for schedule)
California Arboretum Foundation benefit plant sale
May 16, 17 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Insect Fair
June 6 – noon to 4:30 p.m.
So. Cal. Hemerocallis & Amaryllis Society show
June 13, 14 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
National Fuchsia Society show and sale
June 20, 21– Sat. 1-4 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
So. Cal. Gladiolus Society & Floralia Guild # 20 show
July 4, 5 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Cactus & Succulent Society of America show and sale

South Coast Botanic Garden, Palos Verdes Peninsula

May 2, 3 – Sat. 1-4 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
South Coast Rose Society show
May 16, 17 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fiesta de Flores benefit plant sale
May 24 – 2 p.m.
Tiricia Bullaro demonstates creating animal topiaries
June 6, 7 –Sat. 9:30 a.m .to 4:30 p.m., Sun 10 to 4 p.m.
South Coast Branch, National Fuchsia Society show
June 27, 28 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
LA Division, Ntl Model Railroad Association show
July 5 – 2 p.m.
South Bay Bromeliad Associates lecture

Descanso Gardens, La Canada Flintridge

May 9, 10 – Sat. 12 to 4:30 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
International Geranium Society show
May 24 – 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Performing Arts Program Under the Oaks
May 30, 31 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
San Fernando Bromeliad Society show
June 6, 7 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
National Fuchsia Society show and sale
June 6 through June 14 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Descanso Bonsai Society show on main lawn
June 7 – 2:30 to 4: p.m.
Jon Sherman in Performing Arts Program
June 21 – 2:30 to 4 p.m.
Performing Arts Program Under the Oaks
June 28 – 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Performing Arts Program Under the Oaks
June 13 – 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Glendale Chrysanthemum Society plant sale
June 21 – 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Performing Arts Program Under the Oaks

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Deane Dana, 4th District, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st District
Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, 2nd District
Supervisor Edmund D. Edelman, 3rd District
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, 5th District

Los Angeles State & County Arboretum
301 North Baldwin Avenue
Arcadia, CA 91007-2697

Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Drive
La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011

South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274

Virginia Robinson Gardens
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

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